

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A fibrous layer, comprising a refined blend of crosslinked cellulosic fibers and noncrosslinked cellulosic fibers.
2. (Original) The layer of Claim 1, wherein the crosslinked cellulosic fibers are present in an amount from about 50 to about 90 percent by weight based on the total weight of the layer.
3. (Original) The layer of Claim 1, wherein the crosslinked cellulosic fibers are present in an amount from about 75 to about 90 percent by weight based on the total weight of the layer.
4. (Original) The layer of Claim 1, wherein the crosslinked cellulosic fibers are present in about 85 percent by weight based on the total weight of the layer.
5. (Original) The layer of Claim 1, wherein the noncrosslinked cellulosic fibers are present in an amount from about 10 to about 50 percent by weight based on the total weight of the layer.
6. (Original) The layer of Claim 1, wherein the noncrosslinked cellulosic fibers are present in an amount from about 10 to about 25 percent by weight based on the total weight of the layer.
7. (Original) The layer of Claim 1, wherein the noncrosslinked cellulosic fibers are present in about 15 percent by weight based on the total weight of the layer.
8. (Original) The layer of Claim 1, wherein the noncrosslinked cellulosic fibers comprise southern pine fibers.
9. (Original) The layer of Claim 1, wherein the noncrosslinked cellulosic fibers comprise hardwood fibers.
10. (Original) The layer of Claim 1, wherein the noncrosslinked cellulosic fibers comprise eucalyptus fibers.
11. (Original) The layer of Claim 4, comprising from about 5 to about 15 percent by weight refined southern pine fibers.

12. (Original) The layer of Claim 4, comprising up to about 10 percent by weight southern pine fibers.
13. (Original) The layer of Claim 11, wherein the refined southern pine fibers have a Canadian Standard Freeness of about 500.
14. (Original) The layer of Claim 4, comprising from about 3 to about 5 percent by weight hardwood fibers.
15. (Original) The layer of Claim 4, comprising from about 10 to about 12 percent by weight southern pine fibers.
16. (Original) The layer of Claim 1 further comprising a wet strength agent.
17. (Original) The layer of Claim 1 having an extracts' surface tension greater than about 50 dynes/cm.
18. (Original) The layer of Claim 1 having a softness less than about 1200 g.
19. (Original) The layer of Claim 1 having a mid-point desorption pressure greater than about 20 cm.
20. (Original) The layer of Claim 1 having a mid-point acquisition pressure less than about 25 cm.
21. (Original) The layer of Claim 1 having a mid-point uptake greater than about 5 g/g.
22. (Original) The layer of Claim 1 having a tensile strength greater than about 10 N/50 mm.
23. (Original) The layer of Claim 1 having a machine direction tear strength greater than about 205 mN.
24. (Original) The layer of Claim 1 having a cross-machine direction tear strength greater than about 260 mN.
25. (Original) An absorbent construct, comprising a liquid distribution layer and a liquid storage layer, wherein the distribution layer comprises a refined blend of crosslinked cellulosic fibers and noncrosslinked cellulosic fibers.

26. (Original) The construct of Claim 25, wherein the crosslinked fibers are present in an amount from about 50 to about 90 percent by weight based on the total weight of the layer.

27. (Original) The construct of Claim 25, wherein the crosslinked fibers are present in about 85 percent by weight.

28. (Original) The construct of Claim 25, wherein the noncrosslinked fibers are present in about 10 to about 50 percent by weight based on the total weight of the layer.

29. (Original) The construct of Claim 25, wherein the noncrosslinked fibers are present in about 15 percent by weight.

30. (Original) The construct of Claim 25, wherein the storage layer comprises superabsorbent material.

31-36. (Canceled)

37. (Currently amended) An absorbent article, comprising any one of the layers of Claims 1 [[or 31]].

38. (Currently amended) An absorbent article, comprising any one of the constructs of Claims 25 [[or 34]].

39. (Original) The absorbent article of Claim 37, wherein the article is at least one of an infant diaper, a training pant, and an adult incontinence product.

40. (Original) The absorbent article of Claim 38, wherein the article is at least one of an infant diaper, a training pant, and an adult incontinence product.